

Section 6: Supporting All Students

6.1 Well-Rounded and Supportive Education for Students.

Instructions: When addressing the State's strategies below, each SEA must describe how it will use Title IV, Part A funds and funds from other included programs, consistent with allowable uses of fund provided under those programs, to support State-level strategies and LEA use of funds. The strategies and uses of funds must be designed to ensure that all children have a significant opportunity to meet challenging State academic standards and career and technical standards, as applicable, and attain, at a minimum, a regular high school diploma.

The descriptions that an SEA provides must include how, when developing its State strategies, the SEA considered the academic and non-academic needs of the following specific subgroups of students:

- *Low-income students;*
- *Lowest-achieving students;*
- *English learners;*
- *Children with disabilities;*
- *Children and youth in foster care;*
- *Migratory children, including preschool migratory children and migratory children who have dropped out of school;*
- *Homeless children and youths;*
- *Neglected, delinquent, and at-risk students identified under Title I, Part D of the ESEA, including students in juvenile justice facilities;*
- *Immigrant children and youth;*
- *Students in LEAs eligible for grants under the Rural and Low-Income School program under section 5221 of the ESEA; and*
- *American Indian and Alaska Native students.*

- A. The State's strategies and how it will support LEAs to support the continuum of a student's education from preschool through grade 12, including transitions from early childhood education to elementary school, elementary school to middle school, middle school to high school, and high school to post-secondary education and careers, in order to support appropriate promotion practices and decrease the risk of students dropping out; and

The DDOE's vision is, "Every learner ready for success in college, career, and life." This requires a strong focus on rigorous standards and assessments, while also providing a comprehensive support system for students along the continuum of prekindergarten to career.

Data show that student proficiency levels start to decrease at key transition points. Specifically:

- Statewide performance on Smarter mathematics shows that proficiency rates peak at 55% in grade 3 mathematics with a steady decline particularly in grades 6–8 and 11.
- A similar trend occurs in ELA proficiency with students achieving 60% proficiency in grade 5, while middle school and high school hover around the 50% mark. (Refer to <http://www.doe.k12.de.us/Page/3014>)
- In 2013, the DDOE released a statewide College-Going Diagnostic detailing the transition rates of students from ninth grade to high school graduation to first and second year of college. The report revealed that only 30% of the state's ninth-grade cohort made it to the second year of college.

- In 2014, the DDOE entered into a statewide data sharing agreement with Delaware’s public and private higher education institutions. Data showed the remediation rate for Delaware students enrolling in college was 44%.
- Historically students of color, students with disabilities, and EL students fall into these patterns at a higher rate than their peers do.

The DDOE will carry out a variety of strategies using multiple funding sources in order to support student transitions and reduce the risk of students dropping out. The DDOE also will develop technical assistance and/or training for LEAs and schools describing which federal funds may be used and how federal funds may be integrated to support student transitions. Additional supports to individual LEAs and schools will be differentiated based on specific needs identified during their comprehensive needs analyses.

DDOE strategies outlined below are differentiated for each student transition period.

DDOE Strategies to Strengthen LEA Support of Student Transitions From Early Childhood Education to Elementary School

The Delaware Early Childhood Council promotes development of a comprehensive and coordinated early childhood system, birth to eight years old, which provides the highest-quality services and environment for Delaware’s children and their families. The DDOE’s Office of Early Learning works on priorities set forth within the Delaware Early Childhood Council’s Strategic Plan (<http://www.greatstartdelaware.com/resources/EarlyChildhoodStratPlan.pdf>), which has four goals, with correlating objectives and strategies, to accomplish this mission.

Accordingly, DDOE’s work supports student transitions from early learning environments to elementary school. While all goals are necessary for a comprehensive early childhood system, the outcomes of Goal 2 and Goal 3 affect the transition from prekindergarten to kindergarten:

Goal 1: A Healthy Start for All Children – Delaware children will become the healthiest in the nation—physically, emotionally, and behaviorally.

- All children will have high-quality developmental screening and services.
- All children will have support for healthy social-emotional development, including access to mental health services.
- All children will have family-centered health and preventive care, including oral health, healthy eating and lifestyles, and immunizations.
- All families will have access to home visiting services and improved family health practices.

Goal 2: High-Quality Early Childhood Programs and Professionals – All Delaware children will have access to high-quality early childhood programs and professionals.

- All Delaware early childhood providers will be top-tier Delaware Stars for Early Success (Stars) programs.
- All Delaware early childhood providers will facilitate family engagement and support inclusionary practices.
- Delaware will have among the nation’s most highly skilled and best-supported early childhood workforces.
- Delaware’s early childhood workforce will be engaged in professional development that supports continual improvement.

Goal 3: An Aligned and Effective Early Learning System, Birth Through Third Grade – Delaware will create an early learning system that enables all children to arrive at school ready and eager to succeed and that prepares K-12 schools to further enrich children’s early learning, guided by the “Readiness Equation:” Successful Children = Ready Families + Ready Early Education + Ready Communities + Ready Schools.

- Family, community, and school engagement in early learning will be supported statewide by Delaware Readiness Teams and by enhanced resources to support school readiness.
- Early learning educators and families will have access to data to support their teaching and parenting.
- Delaware will have unified learning standards and assessments and will engage early childhood and elementary school teachers in shared programs of teacher preparation and professional development.

Goal 4: Sustained System Improvement – Delaware will develop and sustain policies, programs, and partnerships that generate continual improvement in addressing all children’s developmental needs.

- Delaware will be among the nation’s leaders in implementing best practices in early childhood governance, service integration, and effective and efficient public financing.
- The state will implement continual improvement programs for all early childhood services.
- The state will regularly review the impacts of agency programs on the overall performance of the early childhood system.
- Delaware will lead the nation in the scope and magnitude of community partnership and public commitment to early childhood success.

DDOE received feedback from community conversations and individual stakeholders that reinforced our top early learning priorities. Stakeholders from the Delaware Head Start Association and the Delaware Early Childhood Council acknowledged that many factors contribute to a child’s healthy development early in life—children’s holistic social, emotional, and physical well-being are critical to their success in school and in life. For this reason, DDOE commits to strategies that signal a shift to a statewide P-12 system.

Feedback from community conversations supports the state’s continued investment in early learning through opportunities afforded by ESSA funds. “Participants emphasize the need for more funding to expand access to early education programs” in order “to enroll all children in high-quality preschool.” Several stakeholders expressed support for continued use of Delaware Stars for Early Success (Stars), DDOE’s quality rating and improvement system, to ensure quality accreditation and oversight. Feedback from community conversations also reinforces DDOE’s priority to link early learning and elementary programs in order to provide consistency, continuity, and high-quality services for students from birth through third grade.

Incorporating stakeholder feedback into our plan, DDOE has identified the following strategies to support the development or expansion of Stars early learning programs and thus the number of at-risk children enrolled in these programs. These strategies, which require LEAs to use Title I, Title II, and/or Title III funds, also specifically support families in making the transition from their choice of early learning program to their child’s elementary school.

As a result of stakeholder feedback, the DDOE has identified the following strategies to support student transitions between early learning and elementary school:

- Create a resource toolkit to support LEAs that have an identified need to create or expand high-quality early learning programs or create a partnership with existing community-based programs. The resource toolkit will include:
 - Tools to determine local area’s need for early learning programs.
 - Policy and procedure guidance for programs.
 - Technical assistance to simultaneously allow programs to develop or expand while supporting children and families with resources. Particular topics suggested by the PTA and Governor’s Advisory Committee include:
 - ♦ Allowable uses of Title I, Title II, and Title III funds for serving prekindergarten children in socio-economically diverse classrooms.
 - ♦ Allowable uses of Title I, Title II, and Title III funds for development of prekindergarten children’s literacy skills.
 - ♦ Strategies for supporting children and families’ successful transitions into kindergarten, such as online resources on how to register for kindergarten.
 - ♦ Strategies for implementing Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework requirements.
 - ♦ Strategies for engaging families and providing access to supports—social, health, nutrition, and mental services.
 - ♦ A “menu” of collaboration practices between LEAs and existing community early learning providers, such as Head Start programs. “Menu” to include accessing and implementing assessment tools appropriate for early learning environments and shared professional learning between early learning and LEA educators.

DDOE’s use of funds must support its educators and administrators through alignment of early learning and K-12 professional development and educator preparation, which will allow early learning professionals in all settings “to gain additional access to education and training needed to support children and families.” DDOE supports increased understanding of the developmental needs of children by all LEA educators across the early learning and K-12 systems with its plan to:

- Create shared professional learning opportunities for teachers, principals, other school leaders, paraprofessionals, early childhood education program directors, and other early childhood education providers to prepare the LEA to meet the needs of all young children. Feedback from community conversations suggested topics to increase all education professionals’ knowledge of:
 - Early learning competencies and age-specific, developmentally appropriate practice, such as differentiated instruction supporting all domains of learning, including literacy, mathematics, and social and emotional development.
 - The impact of adverse childhood experiences and trauma-informed practice.
 - How to build inclusive classroom environments.
 - How to plan for school readiness, including addressing the transition to elementary school.
 - How to support dual language learners.

Feedback from community conversations and the Governor’s Advisory Committee articulated a need for coordination between early learning and K-12 systems for a smooth transition of assessment data. DDOE will strengthen curriculum and assessment alignment between early learning programs and elementary schools through specific actions verified by feedback from community conversations:

- Develop a shared definition and vision for appropriate classroom practices birth to 3rd inform all efforts undertaken in aligning PK-12 with early learning.
- Update alignment between the Delaware Early Learning Foundations (standards for early learning) and state standards for grades K-12.
- Create and/or extend “approaches to learning” and “social and emotional” standards through second grade.
- Support LEAs in implementing existing models of prekindergarten through second grade developmentally appropriate schedules, curricula, and formative assessment including assessment of dual language learners prior to transition to kindergarten.
- Assess the feasibility of creating a shared database that captures child-level outcome data between early learning and K-12 systems.

DDOE Strategies to Strengthen LEA Support of Student Transitions from Elementary School to Middle School

Many LEAs have practices and procedures in place to provide students with safe and supportive transitions between schools/grade spans. However, these practices and procedures are not universal. The DDOE will examine current practices in Delaware LEAs and in national literature in order to support all LEAs to engage in effective transition strategies for students.

Stakeholder feedback from the Student and School Supports Discussion identified several strategies to assist students with this transition. Feedback indicated that at-risk students, specifically low SES students, students of color, students in foster care, homeless students, SWDs, ELs, and other at-risk students, would particularly benefit from these strategies.

As a result of stakeholder feedback, the DDOE will develop technical assistance and/or training/professional learning for LEAs to employ strategies, such as:

- Summer transition academies;
- Increasing middle school career and technical education (CTE) program of study options;
- Student-to-student mentoring;
- Orientation events for students and their families;
- Sharing student-created videos of what to expect at the new school;
- Advisory programs/periods to teach skills;
- Summer student home visits by school staff;
- School visits to the new school during the last year in the current school;
- Teaching students about new expectations in the next school setting during the final year in the current school; and
- Open house events for prospective students.
- Supporting adolescent English learners.

DDOE Strategies to Strengthen LEA Support of Student Transitions from Middle and High School to Postsecondary Education and Careers

In 2013, the DDOE released a statewide College-Going Diagnostic detailing the transition rates of students from ninth grade to high school graduation to first and second year of college. The report revealed that:

- Only 30% of the state’s ninth grade cohort made it to the second year of college.
- The state’s remediation rate for those enrolling in college was 44%.

